

TRACTS

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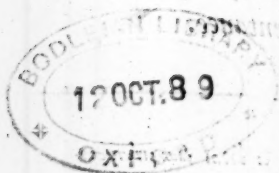
Περὶ τῶν δὴ ἢ τοῖς καλῶντων, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινόμενοι.



OXFORD,
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the UNIVERSITIE 1645.

T R A C T S

1. The first of the land of the
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The Preface.



T is a strong presumption that that Religion is false which is apt to be made use of for secular advantages, that these opinions have somewhat of the *ſ* *ſ* ingredient in them, which are produced as the ground to juſtifie or authorize practices, otherwiſe impious and infamous, There is ſo little *Communion* or compliance *betwixt* God and *Be-ſial* that it is very hard even for Satan himſelfe, that great impure Artificer, to prostitute or debauch any truth of Gods, (which is really ſo) to that meane of vile ſubmiſſion of yeelding it ſelf pliable or inſtrumentall to any deſign or intereſt of his. He which can be corrupted or employed by an enemy is either not ſo honeſt or not ſo clear, either not ſo faithfull, or not ſo wary as might be expected. This one conſideration would prejudice a great part of the divinity of theſe unhappy times, which in a perfect contrariety to the *wiſdome which commeth from above*, *ſam. 3.* Or the *fruits of the ſpirit*, *Gal. 5.* is ſo far from *purity, peaceableneſſe, gentleneſſe, love, joy, long ſuffering, &c.* that it is engaged to owne another extraction, to conſeſſe it ſelfe his creature, and progeny, whom in the lineaments and features it ſo viſibly reſembleth. Among the many ſeverals of this kind I have long conceived that the vulgar notions of thoſe ſoure names, which theſe enſuing Treatiſes have taken confidence to examine, have had no ſmall part of the guilt of theſe ſatall evils under which this calamitous wretched Kingdome now pants a proſtrate gaſtly, and direfull ſpectacle. And conſequently that the obſtructing of theſe fountains might poſſibly abate thoſe ſtreames and torrents (which have taken riſe from thence) of uncharitableneſſe firſt and then of bloud. The miſtaking of every phanſy or humour, carnall or ſaturnicall perſwaſion for *conſcience* (the acknowledged rule of action) and the ſetting up upon too weak a ſtock for that high privilege of a *Good Conſcience*, hath emboldened moſt of the vices of the world, *petrified the practicall faculty, and made it inſenſible of any of thoſe ſtripes, or threats, or diſcipline, which the law of nature or of Chriſt hath provided for the reſtraint of their Subjects. And from thence it daily happens that not onely the moſt unchriſtian but unhumane practices, the moſt unnaturall ſavage barbarities of theſe laſt yeeres, (which no parasite can flatter, or preſident extenuate) are now avowed to be dictates and commands of *conſcience*, and ſo not onely reconcilable with piety, but advanced and ſet up for the onely *meaſure* of it, and no man allowed to paſſe for *conſcientious* which hath any remainder of Morall or Chriſtian virtue (in the ancient notion of the word) diſcernible in his actions; and ſo not onely *ſozimus* his ſlaunder of *Conſtantine* is become the reall guilt of too many pro-

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The Preface.

feffours, (those sins confidently committed by them, for which no other Religion allows any expiation) but, beyond the malice of that false tongue, the sinnes themselves resolved on as a speciall *expiation* or purgative, an act of supererogating virtue, sufficient to sanctifie any other impurities. To these so grosse errors both in opinion and practice the present height or animosity, and vehemence of the flame may possibly have betrayed men; but what it should be that hath so heightened the passion, and first elevated it to this pitch of distemper, will not be discerned any otherwise then by conjecture from the quarrels which have been most insisted on, against the established government and discipline of the Church, and the indifferent actions, and ceremonies, and observances either prescribed, or customary among us; to which when no direct immediate blame or accusation could be affixt, it hath been the manner to object obliquely, sometimes that they have been matter of *Scandall*, and that thought to have been sufficiently proved, if any could be produced who have *disliked* them, (as if their being displeased were to be *scandalized*, or one mans being *angry once without a cause*, were for ever a just cause for others to be angry at that which were of it self most innocent;) Sometimes that the crime of *will-worship* were chargeable on them, supposing first, (but not proving) *will-worship* to be a crime, and then every the least observance uncommanded (though withall as perfectly unprohibited) by Scripture, to be the interpretation of that crime; and sometimes that they have been *Superstitious*; by the equivocallnesse of that word, first perswading themselves and others that every excess in Religion comes under that title, and then that the uncommandednesse of any thing induces that excess, and consequently involves in that guilt. To which three so inauspicious (I may adde *Scandalous*) misprisions breached by Satan, *vis. assensu, to the fall*, and so truly to the *offending of many in Israel*, these ensuing Treatises were designed as Antidotes or cures; to which end if they may prove in any degree successfull, the writer of them will never repent that he hath subjected them to the various & passionate censures of the many, hoping thereby that the mature and impartiall judgements of the few may be also provoked to interpose. By whose pleasure and serious examination, whether they shall stand or fall, they are in all humilitie submitted.

H. Hamond.

OF CONSCIENCE.

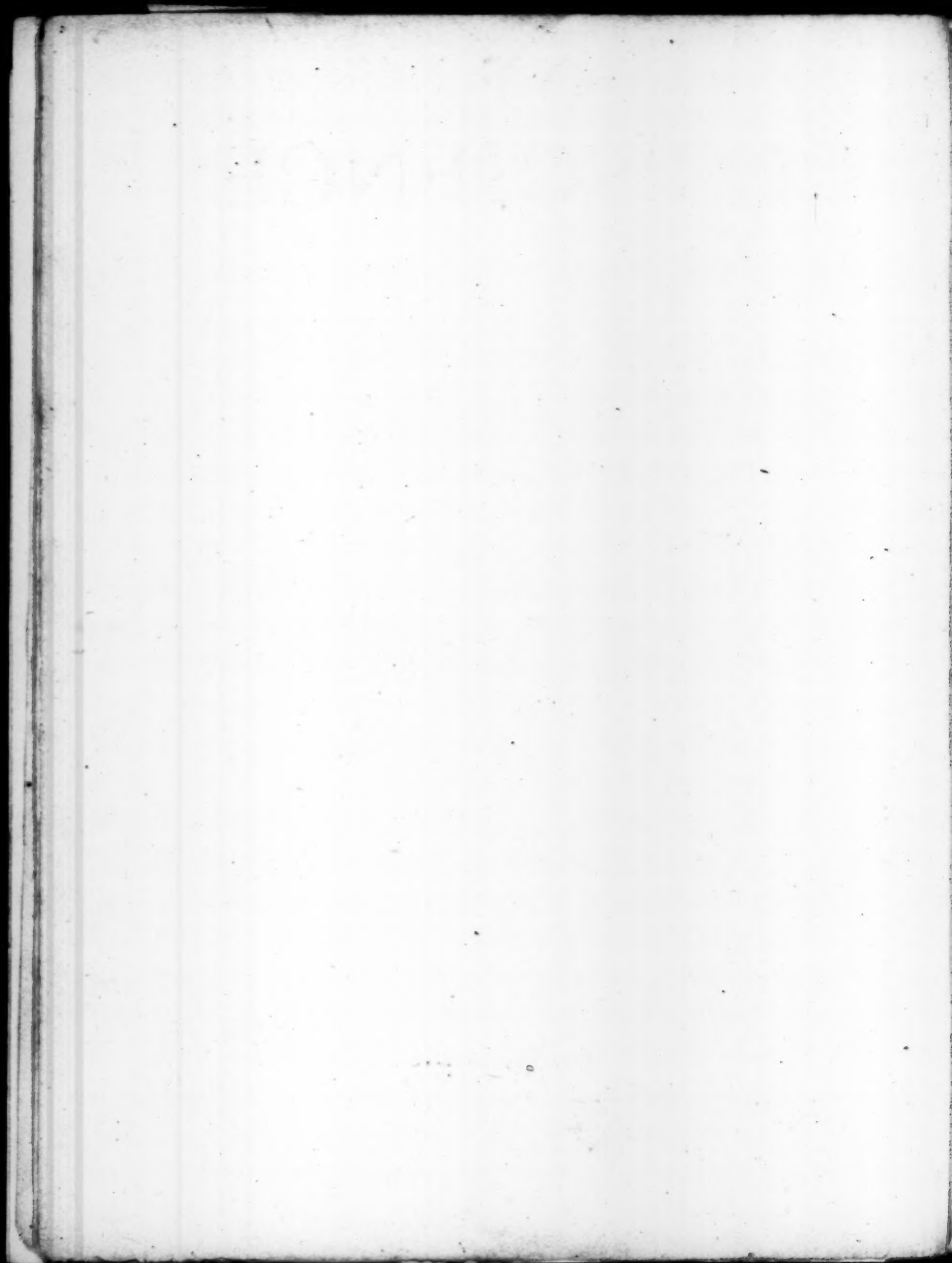
Περὶ τῆς δυνάμεως ἢ τῆς αἰσχύνης, καὶ τῶν ἀλλοῶν διακρίσεων.

By H. Hamond, D.D.



L O N D O N,

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OF CONSCIENCE.



Mong the many practicall errors which are gotten abroad into the world, a very large proportion there is of those which have either suckt their poison from, or disguised it under that specious venerable name of *conscience*. That which the Philosophers could call their Guardian Angell, and justifie the phrase by vouching none but Angelicall dictates from it: That which some good-natured Atheists did so revere that they defined the onely deity in the world, and in pro-

§. 1.

portion phansied nothing but God-like of it, is now by some Christians (like *Διὸς ἑίδωλον* the true God among the Heathens) worshipt in so many corporeous shapes, Tatian. that there is at length scarce any thing so vile (Phansie, humour, passion, prepossession, the meanest worldly interest of the ambitious or covetous designer, like the Calves, the Cats, the Crocodiles, the Onions, the Leeks of Egypt) but hath the favour or luck to be mistaken for *conscience*, and receive all the respect, that I say, nor adoration, that belongs to it.

'Twill be then but an act of justice and mercy, justice to truth, and mercy to the abused world, and withall a speciall preparative to a prudent reformation, to rescue so divine a man from such heathenish usage, to restore it to its naturall primitive simplicity, and cast out all the false formes which it hath been forced to appeare under. To which purpose all that I shall designe will be reduced to these two enquiries:

§. 2.

1. What is the proper notion of conscience.

2. What is required to entitle a man to a good conscience.

For the former of these, what is the proper notion of conscience, I shall labour to finde out not among the Scholasticall definitions or divisions of it among humane Writers, but onely by observing the force and use of the word in the Scripture, particularly the New Testament. And he that shall meet it there 31 times, and but take a view of it at every meeting, will sure come to some degree of acquaintance with it, and find upon judgement reason to resolve, what for his ease I shall now lay before him.

§. 3.

That the word *συνησις*, *Conscience*, is no more then Science or knowledge, (and therefore being but once used by the Gre. k Translators of the Old Testament, *Eccles. 10. 20.* it is there set to expresse a word which

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conscience.

is otherwise by them commonly rendred *συνείδησις* and *ἐπίγνῳσις*) onely with a peculiar relation added to it, as that *knowledge* is in order to *action*. Thus Tit. 1. 15. when *ῥῆς* and *συνείδησις*, mind and conscience are distinguished, tis obvious to any to discern the ground of that distinction, that former being properly the denotation of the faculty merely speculative, or intellectuall; this latter, of the practicall judgement, or that whether act or faculty of the understanding soule, which extendeth to practice; the Apostle by that phrase, [*the mind and conscience are defiled*] meaning distinctly this, that this error in mens judgements, (which is the defiling of their mind) carries Un-Christian practice along with it, (which is the defiling of the practicall faculty) this Judaicall mistake in th^r understanding is attended with Judaizing actions in their lives, the former appertained to the *ἡδαικῆς μύθοις*, the false Judaicall doctrines, which relate to *ῥῆς* the mind, the second to the *ἐντολαὶ ἀνθρώπων* *ἀποστολικῆς καὶ ἀγγελικῆς*, the commands of men perverting the truth, v. 14. which relate to the *συνείδησις* the Conscience.

§. 5.

For the clearing of which (that it is such a practicall knowledge in the acceptation of the Scripture) if there need any light, you may have it from the survey of every place severally, and in speciall from this one, 1 Pet. 2. 19. *This is thank-worthy, if ὁ ἀσυνείδων Θεὸς*, for Conscience of God a man suffer griefe, &c. i. e. if for this obedientiall practicall knowledge of God (his knowledge of truth attended with a resolution not to disobey God, though it cost a man never so deare) he suffer griefe, &c.

§. 6.

This being premised, there is but one thing more to be added to this matter, and it is this; That we take notice of the severall wayes of aspect that Conscience hath upon practice; One forward in the direct line, another backward, or by way of reflection; which are ordinarily exprest by the double office of Conscience, 1. as a *custos* or *monitor*, advising and instructing and keeping us to our duty; 2. as a *witnesse* testifying to our selves and to God what we have done; which is in plainer termes no more but this, That there are two sorts of Conscience; 1. *Conscience of duty to be performed*, or full perswasion that such a thing ought to be done, or not to be done by me, a being resolved of the necessity or unlawfulness of any thing, and 2. *conscience of having performed*, or not performed it, a knowing or judging my self to have done well or ill. And under these two notions, all the severalls in the New Testament, (and the one sole place of the apocryphall bookes of the Old) will be contained, if you please, you may see how.

§. 7.

To the former kind belongs that famous place, Rom. 13. 5. *You must be subject* (to the Supream powers, v. 1.) *not onely for wrath, i. e. feare or danger of punishment, the effect of wrath* (the Magistrate being Gods Minister, an avenger for wrath, or punishment to him that doth evill, v. 4.) but also *ἀσυνείδων*, for or because of Conscience, i. e. because it is the command of God, and consequently that which all interiours (every soule) may, if they be not wilfully blind, know to be their duty, [*to be thus subject.*]

§. 8.

So 1 Cor. 8. 7. *For some with conscience of the Idol, i. e. being resolved in mind, that it is not lawfull to eat or taste of any μὲν or τῶν, part or portion of the Idol-feast* (whether ἰδωλῶν, at the idoll table, or having

bought it at the *Shambles*, as it seemes, was the fashion for those *ῥῆμα* to be sold there at second hand c. 10. 25.) accounting it unlawfull to eat any meat consecrated to that use, doe yet *eat* that which is of this nature, and by so doing, *their weak* i. e. uninstructed conscience is polluted, i. e. they sinne against their conscience, doe that which they are perswaded they may not doe, which although it be never so innocent a harmlesse thing in it selfe (an *idoll being simply nothing*) yet to them which doe it, when they think it unlawfull (and all have not knowledge, saith he in the beginning of the verse, i. e. are not sufficiently instructed in their duty) it is pollution or sinne, according to the fore-mentioned place *Tit. 1. 15. To the pure all things are pure [all things]* i. e. all things of that nature of which he there speaks, though in themselves indifferent, [*are pure*] i. e. may lawfully be used [*by the pure*] i. e. by them which are rightly instructed, but to the polluted and unbelievers (i. e. to them that are misled by Jewish fables, or by the dogmatizing of false teachers, and brought to believe things to be prohibited by God, which are not prohibited) to them that are guilty of this kind of *Judaisme*; and (as it is interpretative) *unbelieve there is nothing pure, but their mind and conscience are polluted*, both their understanding is in an error, taking falsity for truth, and their practicall resolution is sinfull also, may obliged to sin, which way soever they turn themselves, whether they abstaine superstitiously, when they are not bound by God to abstaine, (which is the sinne of those that are *subject to ordinances*, Col. 2. 20. of which I have spoken at large in another place) or whether they abstaine not, when they are perswaded that they ought to abstaine, which is *sin against conscience*.

Tr. of Will
worship.

From whence by the way you may observe the miserable lot of those which have not *ῥῆμα* knowledge in the beginning of that verse, which are misled to think any thing unlawfull which is lawfull, and continue in that error without seeking of light, which are thus *impure* (for to such *καὶ οὕτως nothing is pure*) they are, as long as they remaine so, obliged to sinne, which way soever they take to, abstaine or not abstaine. For though in things indifferent and uncommanded, simply to abstaine were no sinne, yet then to abstaine *ἀπὸ βέλους*, as from a thing abominable or unlawfull, is both by Scripture and the ancient Councils, in case of marriage and meats, every where condemned as sinfull: and yet on the other side to eat *without*, or against Faith, i. e. being doubtfull whether it be lawfull or no, or being perswaded it is unlawfull is *sin*, (saith the Apostle) and there is great necessity to such of seeking, (and in others great charity of helping them to) *ῥῆμα* instruction, or right information in this case, which is the onely cure for this unfortunate malady.

§. 9.

So againe ver. 10. *συνίσχνομεν δὲ τοῖς τοῖς* the conscience of him that is *weak*, or (which is the same) v. 7. and v. 12. the *weak* conscience signifies the false perswasion of him that is in an error, an *erroneous* Conscience, *weaknesse* noting *sickness* in the Scripture stile *John 5. 14. 1 Cor. 11. 30.* and error being the disease or *sickness* of the soule, and that with a little improvement growing destructive and mortiferous; as in case he that hath

§. 10.

that erroneous *sick* conscience, doe act somewhat against conscience, and so adde *sinne* unto *error*; for then ἀπολὶ τοῦ ἀδυνάτου v. 11. that sick man dyes, *perishes* of that *disease*. So ch. 10. 25, 27, 28, 29. the word *conscience* is still in the same sense, for conscience or consideration of duty, and so 1 Pet. 2. 19. forementioned.

§. 11. So likewise 1 Pet. 3. 21. where Baptisme is called ἀποκρίσις τοῦ καλῆς συνείδησιν ἐν-
 παρτηκα iis *Dei* the answer of a good conscience to God, the good conscience signifies conscience rightly instructed in its duty, as in baptizing those of full age it is supposed to be; which *Conscience* is then to answer and consent to all Gods proposals in baptisme (or the ministers in Gods stead) such as [wilt thou forsake the Devill, &c.] and so the words will be interpreted in a sense proportionable to that of denying *ungodly lusts*, Tit. 2. 12. which there the appearing of Christ is said to teach us. For as *lust* proposes *ungodly* questions to us, which we are bound to deny; so God in baptisme is supposed to propose good questions to us, which we are bound to grant, and stipulate the performance of them, and that is the ἐνπαρτηκα the answer of a good conscience to God or to his questions proposed in baptisme, after the manner of ancient pacts among the Romans made by way of question and answer, as part of the *ritus solennis* or formalities of them.

§. 12. But then for the second acception of the word, as it notes conscience of what we have performed, or passing judgement on my selfe for what I have done, (and that either for any one individuall act, or for the maine of our lives, our state; and that againe either 1 acquitting or 2 condemning or 3 considered in a third notion common to both those, passing sentence in general) so shall you find it in many other places, and indeed in all the rest which we have not hitherto named.

§. 13. For the first of these three species as it acquitteth, you have it Act. 23. 1. I have lived, (or behaved my selfe in all my conversation towards men *πρὸς πάντας* in all my politrique, or publique relations) with or in all good conscience, in such a manner, as I cannot excuse my selfe of any thing done contrary to my Christian profession, or dignity of my Apostolicall calling. So 1 Cor. 9. 12. the Testimony of our Conscience is exprest by what followes, that in simplicity &c. we had our conversation in the world. So good conscience is taken 1 Tim. 1. 5. and 19. and 3. 9. and 2 Tim. 1. 3. Heb. 13. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 16. but above all you have a speciall place belonging to this first branch of the second in Act. 24. 16. [Ἀποκρίσις οὐκ ἴδμεν] we render it a Conscience void of offence, the meaning is, a confidence and assurance that he hath done nothing subject so much as to the censure of having scandalized others; for Saint Paul being there accused by the Jewes v. 5. 6. for 3 crimes, sedition, heresie, and profaning of the Temple, he answers to the first v. 12. to the second v. 14. to the third v. 16. 18. and his being purified in the Temple after the Jewish manner he makes an evidence of his innocence in that particular, a proofe of his not having scandalized any Jew, which to have done would have been a fault in him, whose office it was to become all things to all men, that he might gaine or save all, and not to discourage or deter any who might be gained by complacency; and the doing so, is which
 is

is called being ἀσέβητος ἰουδαῖος 1 Cor. 10. 32. giving none offence to the Jews, the very word in the place of the Acts.

In the second place, the accusing or condemning conscience is often mentioned also; *John 8. 9. Convinced by their conscience*, or reproved some for one sinne, some for another. So by intimation Heb. 9. 9. where tis said of the Legall sacrifices that they could not make perfect as pertaining to *Conscience*, where the word [ἁγιασμοῦ] rendred to *make perfect*, signifies in the sacred idiom [to consecrate,] to make a priest, whose office being ἀγγεῖον τῷ θεῷ to draw neare to God, proportionably ἁγιασμοῦ καὶ συνειδήσεως to perfect or consecrate as pertaining to conscience signifies to give access to boldnesse to God, by taking off that guilt which formerly lay upon their conscience, the same that v. 14. is called, *to purge the conscience from dead works*, to wash off that guilt of sin past, which hinders their approach to God, obstructs all entrance to their prayers (for we know that God heareth not sinners, *Joh. 9. 31. and 1s. 1. 15.*) whercupon tis observable, that Heb. 13. 18. when he bespeaks their prayers for him, he adds this reason to encourage them to doe so. *For we trust we have a good conscience*, that good conscience being necessary there to have other mens prayers heard for them, as here to give themselves access to God in prayer. So Heb. 10. 2. *Conscience*, or conscienciousnes of sins, and v. 22. *Evill conscience*, and so *Wisd. 17. 11.* there is mention of *wickednesse condemned by her own witnes and prest by conscience*.

And of the last sort, in the latitude common to both, are *Rom. 2. 15. Rom. 9. 1. 2 Cor. 4. 2. and 5. 11. and 1 Tim. 4. 2.* all cleare enough without the help of our paraphrase to adde light to them.

Having thus marshalled all these places of Scripture into ranks, and given some hints of generall insight into them, it now remains that we return a while to the neerer survey of the two generall heads, and first of the former acception of the word, as it imports a monitor, or director of life, by which our actions must be regulated, and from the mistaking of which the chiefe inconvenience doth arise.

To which end, it will be absolutely necessary to settle and resolve but one question, what is that rule or way of Conscience, from whence it must receive its regulation. For he that draweth a line of direction for another, must have a rule to draw it by, and that a straight exact one, or else the directions will not be authentique, and they which walke ἀκριβῶς exactly or conscientiously, must κατὰ νόμον walk by rule, *Phil. 3. 16. and τὸ αὐτὸ φερεῖν have their eye or thought alway upon that one thing, their rule of direction*, or else be they never such ἐδωκυρτες in the beginning of that verse, such forward proficients, their end may be perdition v. 19. This when once we have done, the difficulty will soone vanish.

And to this purpose I shall take that for granted which in these I never heard any doubt of, (though many of our actions look otherwise in hypothesis) that law is this onely rule; νόμος and νόμος, rule and law being words of the same importance, and nothing fit or proper to regulate our actions, but that which the law-giver, to whom obedience must be payed, hath thought fit to rule them by. To which purpose it is ordinarily observed that

that *ἀσέβεια*, *Sin*, or aberration from that rule by which we ought to walke (for so that word naturally signifies) is by Saint *John* 1 Epist. 3. 4. defined *ἀνομία* which we render a *transgression of the law*. In which place of Saint *John*, though the truth is, (*ἀσέβεια* and *ἀσέβεια νομίμῃ* denoting more then the bare commission of sinne in that Author generally, viz. the wilfull perpetration of it, and an indulgence in, and habit of so doing) the word *ἀνομία* and *ἀνομία νομίμῃ* must proportionably also signifie not onely transgressing, but wilfull habituall contemning the Law, being an *exlex*, or without law (as the Idolatrous Atheist is said to be *without God in the world*) i. e. without any account or respect of it, (and so *μίσθῳ ἀνομίας* *Joh. 3. 13.* notes the greatest degree of sinfulness, we render it *workers of iniquity*, and so very frequently in the Septuagint we finde *ἀνομία*, where we render the Hebrew by *mischiefe*) yet still the observation stands good, that law is the rule, in aberration from which all sinne consists, and so *ἀσέβεια* is *ἀνομία* in both senses, the least degree of sinne a deviation from the law, and a malicious contentious sinning a malicious contemptuous deviation, or transgression, and so Saint *Paul* hath also resolved it, that where there is no law, there is no transgression, no *νόμος*, *Rom. 4. 15.* no going awry, when there is no rule proposed to goe by.

§. 19. This being to cleare in i selfe, and yet through the mistakes, yea and impieties of the world b. come so necessary to be thus farther cleared; Two things there are which will hence inevitably follow, the first Negative, the second Positive; The first or the Negative, that Whatsoever undertakes to direct, or guide our actions, to tell us our duty, that this we must, that we may not doe, and hath not some law, (in force, and still obligatory to us) to authorize those directions by, is not *Conscience*, whatsoever it is.

§. 20. First, Humour it may be, to think our selves bound to doe whatsoever we have a strong inclination to doe, it being a matter of some difficulty to distinguish between my naturall and my spirituall inclinations, the motion of my sensitive appetite, and my diviner principle, my lower, and my upper soule, and the former commonly crying louder, and moving more lively, and impatiently, and earnestly then the other.

§. 21. Secondly, Phantasie it may be, which is a kind of irracionall animall Conscience, hath the same relation to sensitive representations (*those lawes in the members*) which Conscience hath to intellectuall (*those lawes of the mind*) and then, as *Aristotle* saith, that in those creatures which have not reason, phantasie supplies the place of reason; so they which have not, or will not have conscience to direct them, phantasie most commonly gets into its place. Or

§. 22. Thirdly, Passion it may be; Our feares will advise us one thing, our animosities another, our zeale a third, and though that be perhaps zeal of God, yet that zeale is a passion still, one of those which *Aristotle* hath defined in his Rhetoricks, being not *ἐξ ἐμψύχου*, according to knowledge or conscience, *Rom. 10. 2.* for the Hebrew word, as I told you, is rendred by those two words promiscuously, *ἐμψύχου* and *νοεῖσθαι*, knowledge and conscience. Or

§. 23. Fourthly, diabolick suggestion or insution it may be, an enthusiasm of that

that black spirit; as it is, (or of some thing as bad in effect) infallibly, whensoever Rebellion, Sedition, Murther, Rapine, Hatred, Envy, Vncharitablenesse, Lying, Swearing, Sacriledge, &c. come to us under the disguise of Religion and Conscience; and therefore the Spirits must be searcht whether they be of God, or of the Devill; and no surer way to doe it, then by these and the like Symptoms, these fruits and productions of that infernall Spirit, which so perfectly represent and owne their parent, that none but blind or mad men or demoniacks can beleve them in earnest to come from God. Or

Fifthly, False doctrine it may be, and that againe set off either by the authority of the teacher, or by the dignity of some eminent followers and practicers of it, and then the Apostle calls it [*having mens persons in admiration*] or by the earlinessse of its representation, being imbit and taken in first, swallowed and digested before the truth was offered to us, and then it is prejudice or prepossession, and this againe alwayes assisted by the force of that old axiom, [*Intus existens &c.*] and by that which is naturall to all habits, to be hardly moveable, and yet further improved sometimes by pride and obstinacy, alwayes by selfe-love, which makes us think our own opinions (*i. e.* which we are already posselt of) the truest; which in this case is in effect to think our luck the best luck, and the same which was observed in one worst sort of Heathens, who, whatsoever they saw first in the morning, worshipt that all the day after; a choosung of persuasions as country men chooseth Valentines, that which they chance to meet with first after their coming abroad.

Besides these, many other things it may be, and so, 1. It is oddes enough that it will not be conscience, which pretends to be so, and 2. It is certainly not conscience, unlesse it produce some law for its rule to direct us by. And this was the *Negative* or *first* thing.

The second or the Positive thing which followes from the premises, is this, that Conscience of duty in any particular action is to be ruled by that law which is proper to that action; as for example: The *Christian law* is the rule of Conscience for Christian actions; the *law of reason*, or morall law, for morall; the *law nationall*, municipall, or locall, for civill; the *naturall*, *law of all creatures*, for naturall actions; and the *law of scandall*, (a branch of the Christian law) for matters of scandall; and the *law of liberty*, for indifferent free actions. And as it is very irregular, and unreasonable to measure any action by a rule that belongs not to it, to try the exactnesse of the circle by the square, which would be done by the compasse, and in like manner to judge the Christiannesse of an action, by the law of naturall reason, which can onely be judged by its conformity with the law of Christ, superiour to that of nature; So will there be no just pretence of conscience against any thing, but where some one or more of these lawes are producible against it; but on the other side, even in the lowest sort of actions, if they be regulated by the law proper to them, and nothing done contrary to any superiour law, even by this God shall be glorified, 1 Cor. 10. 31. a kind of glory refusing to God from that readinesse of submission and

§.24.

§.25.

§.26.

subordination of every thing to its proper rule, and law, to which the great Creator hath subjected it, and of all lawes to that supreme transcendent one, the law of Christ. And though some touches there are in the Scripture of each of these lawes, some *fibra* or strings of them discernibly there, so farre, that there is nothing almost under any of the heads forementioned, but by the Scripture some generall account may be given of it, and againe, though that of Scripture be the supreme law of all, and nothing authorizeable by any inferiour law, which is contradicted or prohibited by that, yet is not that of Scripture such a particular Code or Pandect of all lawes, as that every thing which is commanded by any other law, should be found commanded there, or be bound to prove its selfe justifiable from thence, any further then that it is not there prohibited, or thereby justly concluded to be unlawfull.

§. 27.

From whence by the way, I conceive direction may be had, and resolution of that difficult practicall probleme, what a man may doe in case he be legally commanded by his lawfull superiour to doe what he may lawfully doe, which yet he is perswaded he may not doe, or doubteth whether he may or no. For in this case if he be not able to produce some plaine prohibition from some superiour law, as from that of Scripture, he cannot be truly said to be perswaded in conscience, (which implyes knowledge) of the unlawfulnessse of that thing, nor consequently hath he any plea for disobedience to that lawfull command of his Superiours. All that may be said, is, that he may from some obscure place misunderstood have cause or occasion to doubt whether he may doe it or no, and then, although doubting simply taken (*i.e.* where no command interposes,) may keep me from doing what I doubt, yet it ought not to be of that weight, as to keep me from my lawfull Superiours lawfull command, because that very command is a sufficient ground to supersede my doubting, when I have no plaine prohibition of Scripture to the contrary, (which in this case I am supposed not to have, for if I had, Then, first, it were not a lawfull command, and secondly, I should not doubt but be assured) it being my duty, and part of my Christian meekness, in doubtful matters to take my resolution from those whom God hath placed over me, and it being the sinne of dogmatizing to affirme any thing for me or others to doe, which some law of God, &c. still in force, doth not prohibit; which sin being added to that other of disobedience to my lawfull Superiours, will sure never be able to make that commence virtue, which was before so far from any pretensions to that title.

§. 28.

Having proceeded thus far in the search of the ground of Conscience, 'twere now time to reduce this operation to practice, and shew you, first, What directions Conscience is able to afford from every of those lawes for the ruling of all actions of that kind; and secondly, What an harmony and conspiration there is betwixt all these lawes, one mutually ayding and assisting the other, and not violating or destroying. But this were the largest undertaking that could be pitcht on in the whole circle of learning, *Arodius's Pandectæ rerum ab omni ævo judicatarum*, and all the Schoolmens and Casuists volumes, *de legibus, de jure & justitiâ*, and on the Decalogue, would be but imperfect parts of this; I shall give you but one taste or *señis* of it, by which

which the Reader will be perswaded to spare me, or rather himselfe that trouble.

The prime of these, the Christian law, is the rule of all actions that come within that sphere, sets downe the nature of all Christian duties of piety, and love of our brethren in generall, and more particularly of Faith, Hope, Charity, Repentance; selfe-denyall, taking up the crosse, &c. of humility, meeknesse, mercifulnesse, peaceablenesse, obedience to superiours, patience, contentednesse, and the like; and the relation of a Christian being a grand transcendent relation, there is no action imaginable, but may either in respect of the matter, or motive, or principle, or circumstances, offend against one of these, (and then, *malum ex qualibet defectu*, the least of these defects blemisheth it) and so conscience directed by that rule or law, will direct me either to doe it, or not to doe it in that manuer, and then tis not any compliance with, or agreeablenesse to any or all other lawes, which will make this action Christian, which hath any such notable defect or blemish in it; Not to pursue this any farther, having thus named it, and shewed you the vastnesse of the sea it leads to, it will suffice to our present designe to tell you, that from what is said these 3 corollaries, to omit many others, will be deducible.

1. That it is not possible for Conscience (be it never so strongly perswaded) to make any action lawfull, which is not regulated by those rules, or lawes which are proper to it, and reconcileable with the grand rule, the Christian law. Conscience can never transforme *profanenesse* into piety, *sacrilege* into justice or holinesse, *rebellion* into obedience, *faction* into humility, *perjury*, or taking of unlawful oathes into religion, *rapine* into contentednesse, *inhumanity* into mercifulnesse, *adultery*, *fornication*, *divorces*, (save in case of adultery) or any uncleannesse into purity, *labouring to shake a Kingdome*, (to remove the crosse from my owne shoulders to another mans) into taking up of the crosse; but contrariwise, if it be truly and univocally Conscience of duty, it will tel me that every one of these foule titles belongs to every such action (the Scripture being so cleare in these particulars, that there is no place or excuse for ignorance or mistake) and by setting before me the terrors of the Lord, perswade me not to venture on any one such action upon any termes; or if I have ventured, it will smite and wound me for it, and drive me to timely repentance; or if it doe not, tis either a cauterized insensate conscience, a reprobate mind, or else some of these Images, which even now I mentioned, mistaken for Conscience; or if it be a full perswasion of miade, that what I thus am about, I am obliged to doe, (if that be a possible thing in such matters and under so much light) tis then in the calmest style an erroneous Conscience, which is so far from excusing me (unlesse in case of ignorance truly invincible, which here is not imaginable) that it brings upon me the most unparalleld infelicity in the world, an obligation to sinne which way soever I turne my selfe, on one side appearing and lying at my doore the guilt of committing that sinne which I have so mistaken, and on the other the guilt of omitting that (though sinne) which my Conscience represented to me as duty; and nothing but repentance and reformation

of judgement first, and then of practice, will be able to retrieve the one or the other.

§.31. The second corollary will be this, That it is the most unreasonable insolence in the world, for them that can swallow such Camell-sins as these without any regrets, nay with full approbation, and direction (perhaps) of conscience (it that may be called *Conscience* which is so divided from, and contrary to *knowledge*) yet to scruple and interpose doubts most tremblingly, and most conscientiously in matters of indifferency; not so much as pretended to be against the word of God, (and so within the law of christian liberty, that they may be done if he will) and yet over and above their naturall indifferency commanded by that authority, in subjection to which the christian vertue of obedience consists; and all this either first upon no ground of conscience at all, but only that it is contrary to their *Phansy*, their *Humour*, their *Prepossessions*; or Secondly because it is a restraint, upon their christian liberty, which yet Christ never forbid to be restrained *quoad exercitium*, as farre as belongs to the exercise of it, but hath permitted sometime the care of not offending the weak brother, i. e. Charity, and sometime Obedience, to lawfull superiours, to restraints it, (for if in things indifferent they may not restraints, there can no obedience be payed to them;) or Thirdly because they are offensive (though not to them, yet) to others, who are perswaded they are unlawfull. Whereas 1 that perswasion of those others is erroneous, and not sufficient to justify disobedience in themselves, much lesse in other men, in case of lawfull humane command, And 2 that their censuring of such indifferent actions, i. e. being *angry without a cause*, may bee greater matter of scandall, and so more offensive to others, and more probable to work upon them to bring them by that example to be so angry also, then the doing that indifferent action, mistaken by others, and condemned for unlawfull, would be to bring them to transcribe that reprobated sampler, i. e. to doe what they thus condemn; all men being farre more apt and inclinable to break out into passions, then into acts against conscience, and so more likely to be scandalized or offended, or insnared, by following the former, then the latter example, to sinne (for company or after another man) by censuring whom he censures, which is being angry without a cause; then by doing what they are advised and resolved they ought not to do, which is sinning against conscience. Or fourthly, because they are against their conscience to doe, whilst yet they produce no law of God or man against them, and so in effect confesse there is nothing in them against conscience; unlesse, as before was noted, they wilfully equivocate in the word *conscience*; which will and skill of theirs, as it will not make any thing, unlawfull, which before was indifferent, so will it not conclude ought, save only this, that they which are so artificiose to impose on others, and forme scruples where there were none, would not be thought the likeliest men to swallow grosse sinnes under the disguise of vertues; or if they doe so, will have least right to that onely Antidote of invincible ignorance to digest them.

§.32. The third corollary will be this, that scrupulousness of conscience in some

Some lighter lesse important matters (if it may be supposed excusable, as a weaknesse of an uninstructed mind, joyned with that good symptome of tenderesse of quick sense, yet) can never hope to be accepted by God by way of commutation or expiation for graver sinnes, so that he that falls foully in any confessed sinne, should fare the better at the great day of account, or be in lesse danger of being cast out of Gods favour for the present, because he is over-scrupulous in other things: For sure this were a strange way of supererogation to pay one arrear to God by running into another with him, to discharge a debt by owing more. And yet this is an error which may seem worth the paines of preventing, it being so notoriously seen, that somemen, which protest to have care of their wayes, and must in charity be beleaved to have so, goe on confidently in greivous sins, which they cannot but know will damne without repentance, (the sentence of not inheriting the Kingdome of God, Gal. 5. being so distinct, and punctuall, and absolute, and indispenfable against them) and yet have no Antidote to relye on for the averting that danger, but onely this of their exactnesse and scrupulousnesse in things indifferent; which if they shall say they doe not confide in, they are then obliged in conscience, and charity to their brethren (who may follow them to this precipice) either to give over hoping, or to set to purifying, without which there is no true ground of hope. This hint puts me in mind that there is another part of my design still behind, belonging to the second notion of conscience, to examine

What it is that is required to entitle a man to a good conscience; which will briefly be stated by premising what before was mentioned, that the good conscience belongs either to *particular* single performances, or to the *whole state of life* and actions. To the first there is no more required, but that that particular action be both for matter and circumstance regulated by the rule, or rules which are proper to it, and have nothing contrary to any superiour transcendent rule. As that my meale be with *sobriety* and *thanksgiving*, my almes with *cheerfulnesse*, *liberality*, *discretion*, done in *gratitude* and *obedience* to God, and *mercifulnesse* to my brother, without reflexion on my own gaine or praise in this world. But for the *Good Conscience*, which belongs to the whole state of life and actions, which is called a *good Conscience in all things*, Heb. 13. 18. or a *good Conscience* consisting in having a *good conversation in all things*, (for so the punctuation in the Greek will direct rather to render it, [we have a good conscience, willing to live well, (or have an honest conversation) in all things] there the difficulty will be greater. And yet two Texts there are which tend much to the clearing and disinvolving of that one, 1 Pet. 3. 16. where ἀγαθὴ συνείδησις, *Good Conscience* in the beginning of the verse, is explained in the close by ἀγαθὴ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφή, a *good conversation in Christ*, or a good christian conversation, or such as now through Christ, by the purport of the second covenant may and shall be accepted for good. Where the word [*conversation*] denoting first the actions and behaviour both toward God and man, and secondly, the whole course and frame of those actions, (wherein it seems a good conscience consists,) cannot better be explained then either by the

§. 33.

ἀγαθὴ συνείδησις ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστροφή
ἀναστροφή

Apostles, ἀκριβὲς μετρητῶν, an accurate exact walking, Eph. 1. 15. or the phrase to Titus, c. 2. 12. living soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; the first respecting our duty to our selves, or actions, as private men; the second, our duty to our brethren, in our more publique capacities; the third, our duty to God as creatures, men, and Christians; or Saint Lukes character of Zachary and Elizabeth, Luk. 1. 6. walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blamelesse; walking Blamelesse, in all: *universall sincere obedience*, (not entire or perfect without ever sinning, but) considered with the rules of ἐπιμέλεια, or moderation of *strict law*, (which is now part of the νόμος πίστεως, the Gospel-law, by which a Christian is to be tryed, as equity is a part of the municipall law of this land; Such is mercy for frailties, and infirmities, and grosser lapses recovered and retracted by repentance) now under the Gospel, so as to be acceptable to God in Christ; which was intimated (as in the ἐκ περισώ, in Christ, 1 Pet. 3. so) in the former part of that verse, and their character *δικαιοὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ*, righteous before God: Which phrase [Before God] hath a double intimation worth observing in this place, first of the perseverance or perpetuity of that righteousness (as opposed to the temporary of the hypocrite) for the phrase ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ [before him] refers to the shew bread of old, Exod. 25. 30. which was to be set before God alway; and therefore is sometime called לחם פנים the bread of faces, or לפני bread before his face, literally ἐνώπιον, before him, and sometimes לחם חתמוד perpetuall bread, and secondly, of the acceptation or reception in the sight of God, for that againe was the end of setting the bread alwayes before God, that God looking on it might accept them; and so righteousness before God, is such righteousness as God will please in the Gospel to accept of, as when visiting the fatherlesse, &c. Jac. 1. 27. is called, religion pure and undefiled before God the Father; it noteth such a degree of unblemisht purity, not as excluded all sinne, but as God in Christ would (or hath promised to) accept of. And the same phrase therefore is in another place of the same Chapter, Luk. 1. 75. rendred by our Church in the Gospel for Midsummer day by these words, such as may be acceptable for him.

§. 34.

Which being all taken into the description of a good conscience, that it is such a continued good conversation as God now under the Gospel promisseth to accept of; the onely difficulty behind will be, what that is which God promisseth to accept of; To which end, it will be very instrumentall to take in that other place which I promised, and that is that forementioned, Heb. 13. 18. where the Good Conscience is evidenced (or the ground of confidence that he hath a good conscience, demonstrated) by this ἐκ παντός καλῶς διανοίας ἀναστέλλειν willing, or resolving, or endeavouring to live honestly, or to have honest conversation in all things. From whence the onely thing which I desire to collect is this, That the sincere resolution or endeavour to live honestly in all things (which I remember one of our ancientest Church-writers Saint Cyrill of Jerusalem calls, δεινὴν δίκην ἀγαθῶν, and opposes it to ἔργα, works) is the Scripture nomination of a good Conscience, or the μέγας

μεγας πηποςιος θηωρεω, that great treasure of confidence to all which have it; that ground of mature perswasion for any, that he hath, or shall by God be allowed, and acknowledged to have a good conscience.

And if it be farther demanded what is necessarily required, (and how much will be sufficient) to denominate a man Such, what is the *minimum quod sit* of this sincere resolution, or endeavour, although that, I confess, will be hard if not impossible, to define in such a manner, as shall come home to every particular, (the proportions of more or lesse, *knowledge* or *strength*, the inequality of the talents of *illuminating* and *assisting* grace still interpoling and making a variation) yet will it not be matter of much difficulty to give some generall advertisements, and *απειλεις*, which will be acknowledged as soone as mentioned, and being put together, and by each man single applied to his particular case, by way of self-examination, will be able to tell him in some measure, whether he hath a good conscience or no. And the first of these will be, That

§. 35.

Acts and habits of sinne in the former (heathen or unregenerate) part of the life, of what nature (and clothed with what aggravations) soever, if they are now retracted and renounced by repentance (as that signifies not onely a sorrow, but a thorow change) are reconcileable with a good conscience. The truth of which is cleare, first, because the Gospel allowes place for *repentance*, and promises rest to the heavy laden, so he come unto Christ, and mercy to him that *confesseth and forsaketh*. Secondly, because the sincerity of resolution and endeavour now, (which is all that is required to a present good conscience) is reconcileable with *past sins*, even of the largest size. Thirdly, because Saint Paul himselfe, which was once a Saul, can yet say confidently, that *he hath a good conscience*. And fourthly, because (which I shal a little enlarge on) the sinne against the holy Ghost, which alone is by the Gospel made uncapable of remission, is, as I conceive, no act, no nor course of any speciall sinne, but a state of final impenitence, a continued persevering resistance of all those saving methods which are consequent to the descent, and are part of the office of the holy Ghost.

§. 36.

ματαιωμενα
μετρησια.

To which purpose I shall give you one hint which may perswade the preferring of this opinion before the contrary, and it is by observing the occasion of Christs delivering those words concerning the irremissibleness of speaking against the holy Ghost. Those words are delivered by Christ both in Saint Matthew and Saint Mark upon occasion of that speech of the Jewes, that Christ cast out Devils, by the Prince of Devils, which was clearly a blaspheming or speaking contumeliously against Christ himselfe, or the sonne of man, and there is no passage in the Text which can conclude that that speech of theirs was by Christ called the *blasphemy against the holy Ghost*, but rather the contrary that it was a *blasphemy onely against the sonne of man*; for tis apparent that Christ Mat. 12. 15. for the space of six verses sets himselfe to convince them of the falsity of that speech (which probably he would not have done, if they, to whom he spake had been in an irrecoverable irreverfible estate of blasphemy. For that he should take such paines onely to leave them unexcusable, i. there was no great need, in this case they were

§. 37.

were so already. 2. it is a mistake to think that Christ doth so at any time, they are bowels of mercy and not designs of mischieving, or accumulating their sinne, and judgements, which incline him to call and knock, and labour to convince sinners) and having done that, doth both invite them to repentance by shewing them the possibility of pardon yet, and give them an admonition able to shake them out of all impenitence, by telling them the danger which attended, if the only last method of working on them which was yet behind, did not prosper with or work upon them, This is the importance of that 31 and 32 verse concerning *the speaking a word, i. e. standing out against the sonne of man* on one side, and *the Holy Ghost* on the other; the summe of which is this, there shall be by the coming of the Holy Ghost a possibility of pardon and meanes of reformation for those that resist and hold out and even crucifie Christ (as by the coming of Christ, there was for those that should beleive on him, though they had formerly lived disobedient unto God the Father, resisted those methods of mercy used on them under the old Testament) for *them that speak a word, i. e. by an Hebraisme doe an action* (of affront, of injury, of contumely) *against Christ*, yea that resist and beleive not on him, but conceive and affirme him to *cast out Devils by the power of Beelzebub*, (which was as contumelious a thing as could be said of him) but when Christ shall be taken from the earth, and the Holy Ghost shall be sent down to convince the world of that great sinne of crucifying Christ, and to scule in the Church of God such an orderly use of all Gospell-meanes that may tend to the bringing sinners to repentance (the use both of the *word* and *sacrament* and *censures* and all other things necessary to that great end of working on the most contumacious) that if this prevails not, there is little hope left of ever working on such perverseness, then it is to be resolved, that those that thus stand out against all those saving methods of Gods last economy, shall be left incapable of any good, of any whether meanes of yet-farther working on them, or of pardon either in the Church or in heaven, there being no more persons in the God-head now behind (unlesse we will change the christians Trinity into Pythagorasles *τρεῖς θεοὶ*) nor consequently meanes in the providence of God, for the reducing of, or obtaining mercy for such. By this it will appeare that this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not any one act nor habit of sin (particularly not that speaking against Christ there, which you will also guesse by Saint Luke, who mentions not that speech of theirs concerning his casting out Devils by the Prince of Devils, and yet sets down this speech of Christ, of the irremissibility of this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, *Luke 12. 10.* which argues that this hath no neare relation to that) but a finall holding out against, and resisting the whole office of the Holy Ghost, and all those gracious methods consequent to it.

§.38.

To which I shall only adde in reference to my present purpose (that there may be no place of doubting even to him which will not receive my interpretation of this place) that even by those which conceive it to be some speciall kind of sinne, yet the unpardonableness of it is acknowledged to arise from thence, that it is impossible for any such to repent, yet not for any

any that repents to find pardon and mercy, which is sufficient for the confirmation of my present proposition.

'Tis true indeed, that he that is sold a slave of sinne, the unregenerate carnall man, is, whilst he is so, in a most hopelesse, comfortlesse estate, and if he have any naturall conscience left him, it must needs be a kind of teind and fury with him, *No peace to such wicked, saith my God*, and it is as true that the recovery of such a man out of the grave of rotneness, that Lazarus state in sinne, is a miracle of the first magnitude, a work of greatest difficulty (*Christ groanes at the raising of him that was 4 dayes dead and putrified in the grave*) and costs the sinner much dearer to be raised out of it. *Saul is stricke down* in his march towards *Damascus*, blind and trembling before his conversion; but yet still when this conversion is wrought, he may have a good Conscience what ever his foregoing sins were.

§.39.

And although the Apostles Censure *Heb. 6. 6. and 10. 26.* light yet heavier upon those who after the knowledge of the truth and gust of the life to come, and participation of the holy spirit relapse to their former sinnes, it being there affirmed that there is no possibility to renew them, or (as the Greeks *ἀνακαθίσταναι* read it) for them to renew or recover to repentance, and consequently the sacrifice for sinne (*ἀνὰ τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν*) no longer belonging to or remaining for them, yet doth not this hinder the truth of the present proposition; for 1 those places to the Hebrews belong not to the sins of the unregenerate life, which only now we speak of, but of the relapse after the knowledge of the truth, 2. even in those places speaking of those sinnes, the doctrine is not, that there shall be any difficulty of obtaining pardon for them upon repentance, (for the Subject of the Apostles Propositions is the *ἁμαρτανία* and *ἀμαρτανία* men considered exclusively to repentance, as abiding in sinne unreformed impenitent, and to such we designe not to allow mercy) but that this is so great a grieving and quenching of the spirit of God, that it becometh very difficult, and in ordinary course impossible for them that are guilty of it to repent, *καὶ ἐν ἀκαθίστασιν εἰς μετάνοιαν* again to recover to repentance: It being just and ordinary with God upon such sinnes of those to whom he hath given grace, to withdraw that grace againe, according to his method and oeconomy of providence exprest in the parable of the talents, [*from him that hath not made use of the grace or talent given, shall be taken away even that which he hath*] and *Wisd. 1. 5.* the holy spirit of discipline will not abide where unrighteousnesse cometh in; and so being thus deprived of that grace, it is consequently impossible that those should *ἀνακαθίσταναι*, in a neutrall sense, *renew and recover*, or in an active reciprocall *renew or recover themselves to repentance*, though yet for God to give a new stock of grace it is not impossible, but only a thing which he hath not by revealed promise obliged himselfe to do; and therefore whether he will doe it or no, is meetly in his own hand and dispositive power, and that which no man hath ground to hope and title to challenge from him. All which notwithstanding our present proposition stands firm, that where there is repentance, or true thorow change, those former retracted acts or habits are reconcileable with good Conscience.

§.40. The second this, that *Sinnes of weaknesse of all kinds*, whether first, of ignorance, or secondly, of naturall infirmity, the one for want of light, the other for want of grace, or thirdly, of suddaine surreption, such as both by the law of [*Si quis præcipiti calove*] in the Code of *Iustinian*, and by the municipal laws of most nations, are matter of extenuation to some crimes, to discharge them from capitall punishment, at least to make them capable of pardon, or fourthly, of dayly continuall incursion, either for want of space to deliberate at all, or because it is morally impossible to be upon the guard to be deliberate always, (*opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum*) or fifthly, which through levity of the matter passes by undiscerned, and the like, are irreconcilable with a good conscience, because againe, be a man never so sincerely resolute and industrious in endeavour to abstaine from all sinne, yet as long as he carries *flesh* about him, (which is such a principle of weaknesse, that ordinarily in the New Testament, the word *flesh*, is set to signifie *weaknesse*) such weaknesse he will be subject to, such frailties will be sure to drop from him. This, I remember, *Parisensis* illustrates handsomely, first, by the similitude of an armed man provided with strength and prowesse, and wrestling with another *in lubrico*, on a slippery ground, who though neither weapons nor strength nor courage fail him, yet may have very probably fall, the slipperinesse of the footing will betray him to that; or secondly by an horseman mounted on an unmanaged or tender-mouth'd horse, who cannot with all his skill and caution secure himself: from ail misadventures, the beast may upon a check come over with him, or getting the bit into the mouth ruane into the enemies quarters; or thirdly, by a City that is provided for a siege with workes, and men, and victuals, and ammunition, and yet by a treacherous party within may be betrayed into the enemies hands; there is a principle of weaknesse within like that slippery pavement, that tender-mouthed beast, that insidious party, which will make us still lyable to such miscarriages, and nothing in this contrary either to courage or diligence, to resolution, or endeavour. And for such as these frailties, ignorances, infirmities, &c. So they be laboured against, and the means of preventing or overcoming them sincerely used (which if it be done, you shall find them dayly wain in you, and if they doe not so in some measure, you have reason to suspect, and to double your diligence) there is sure mercy in Christ to be had, obtaineable, by dayly confession, and sorrow, and prayer for forgiveness of trespasses) without any compleat conquest achieved over them in this life. It being *Saint Pauls* affirmation, very exactly and critically set downe, *Rom. 5. 6.* that Christ *ὅταν ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἁμαρτωνοὶ, ὡς ὅταν ἀσθενεῖς, we being weak, dyed for the ungodly, to note the universal benefit of his death for such weak ones and such sinnes as these to which meer weaknesse betrayes them. The very doctrine which from that text at the beginning of our reformation our Reverend Bishop Martyr did assert in his excellent Preface to his explication of the commandements.*

Hooper.

§.41. To which purpose I shall onely adde one prooffe more, taken from the ῥη λόγικόν or rationall importance of *Saint Pauls* exhortation *Rom. 15. 1.* *we that are strong, saith he, must beare the weaknesse, ἀδυναμία, of them* which

as that signifies a Conscience of well-doing or doing nothing against rule of Conscience, for that this man *in terminis* is supposed to doe.

§.45.

Having now proceeded thus farre in the affirmative part in shewing what sinnes are reconcileable with a good Conscience, I should now proceed to the negative part and shew what are not reconcileable therewith. But before I advance to that, there is one classis or head of sinnes, about which there is some question and difficulty of resolving, to which of the extreames it should be reduced, i. e. whether it be reconcileable, or unreconcilable with a good Conscience. And that is the single Commission of some act of knowne sinne, which hath not the Apology of weaknesse to excuse it, and yet is not indulged or persisted or continued in, (for of those that are so, you shall hear anon in the 8 Proposition) but without delay retracted by humiliation and reformation; For the stating and satisfiying of which it will be necessary first, to observe that

§.46.

Any such act of wilfull sinne *First*, hath in it selfe a being, and so is capable of a notion abstracted from the retraction of it. Yea secondly, is a work of some time, and though it be never so suddenly retracted by repentance, yet some space there is before that retraction; and if we speak of that time or space, there is no doubt, but that act, first, is contrary to good conscience, and contracts a guilt, and consequent to that, the displeasure of God and obligation to punishment, which nothing but repentance can do away; yea and secondly, is a naturall means of weakning that habit of good, of sauciating and wounding the soule, and for that time putting it in a bloody direfull condition, and should God before repentance strike, for ought we know there would be no remission, and so, fearfull would be the end of that soule.

§.47.

But then secondly, if before God thus visit in justice, repentance interpose, (as in this present case we suppose it doth) if this plank be caught hold on instantly upon the shipwrack, if he that hath committed this act of carnality, &c. lye not down (after the manner of the Grecian horses in Saint Ambroses expression, *qui cum ceciderint, quandam tenent quietis & patientie disciplinam, ac taught, when they fall in the race, not to strive or endeavour to get up again*, lye still on the ground with great stillnesse and patience) *walk not after the flesh, Ro. 8.1.* Then presently is he set right again in Gods favour, upon (performance of the solemnities, as it were, payment of the fees of the Court) humiliation, contrition, confession, and lowly supplications to God for pardon in Christ, and so then to him thus repaired there is *no condemnation*; beside the forementioned effects that attended that sinne at the time there is no future arrear behind in the other world.

§.48.

As for the other effect of sinne in this life, the wasting of the Conscience, or provoking of God to withdraw his grace; though any such act of wilfull sinne may justly be thought to do that also in some degree, first, to stop God from going on in his current of liberality, and secondly, to cast us back from that plenitude and abundance, which before in the riches of Gods bounty in Christ was afforded, and so much weaken our stock of grace, leave us much more infirme then wee were before the Commission; yet wee
find

find not any threat in Scripture that God will, upon this provocation of one single act not persisted in, presently withdraw all grace, but we have reason to hope what the Article of our Church supposes, that in this case he leaves sufficient graces to enable that *child* of his, that thus *falls*, by that his *grace to return again*.

And if that sad presage, *Heb. 6. 6.* seem to any to withstand this, the answer will be prompt and easy, by observing that the word *ἀποστήναι*, there [*the fallers away*] signifies more then some one single act of sinne presently retracted againe, even a generall Apostacie in their practice, (if not in their faith) a return to their former unregenerate sinnes, (as the phrase *ἐμπλεκόντες ἑαυτοὺς*, [*they being entangled are overcome*] notes *2 Pet. 2. 20.* a place perfectly parallell to this, and) as in this place the ancients have generally interpreted. And then though such indulgence in sinne, such *returning to the vomit or mire againe* in that other place, doe provoke God to withdraw his grace necessary to enable them to repent, yea and cast them back into a *worse* estate then they were in, not onely before such sinning, but even before their conversion, *2 Pet. 2. 20.* Yet that God will so punish with totall desertion any one act or commission presently retracted againe, it is not affirmed here nor any where else, that I have observed, but rather on the contrary, that he will visit them with chastisements which are a *grace* and a meanes to recall them, without any utter *forsaking or taking of his loving kindnesse from them*, *Psal. 89. 33. 35.*

§. 49.

That this matter may be thoroughly cleared, I shall suppose this objection made against what hath hitherto been said of it, that it may seem by this doctrine, [that the regenerate man may bee under Gods displeasure] that hee that remaines sanctified may be unjustified, for so he will be, if all his sinnes be not forgiven him, which they are not, if this act of sinne not yet repented of, be not forgiven. In answer to this, I shall reinforce my affirmation, that of necessity it must be granted, if we believe the Scripture, that any such act of sinne unretracted by repentance, doth certainly stand upon the sinners score unremitted; for that God (as some affirme) doth at the first act of my being justified, forgive all my sinnes not only past, present, but also future too; cannot be said, but upon a supposition that that man will never commit any such sinne against which the Gospell threatens perishing, i. e. any deliberate presumptuous sinne, (which supposition if it were true, would inferre an impossibility of the regenerate mans thus sinning, not an assurance of his pardon without (or abstracted from the consideration of) his repentance, which is the only point, in hand) for if he doe, then upon confession and forsaking there is promise of mercy, and not otherwise; and in briebe, without repentance there is no remission: and therefore it is observable, that they which thus affirm, find themselves enforced to fly to Gods omnipotence and immensity, to whom all things are present; by help of which they can conceive and resolve that at the time of that sinnes being upon him unrepented of, God yet seeing his future repentance as present, may seale his pardon, and then may by the same reason do so also before the commission; the weaknesse of which arguing, I shall no farther de-

§. 50.

monstrate then by this rejoinder, that by the same reason it might be said, that a man is justified before he is borne, which yet the objectors doe not affirme, but that at the time of his first conversion, be it at such a Sermon or the like, he was justified, and then all his sins past, present, and to come forgiven him, which is as contrary to the notion of all things being present with God, as to say that this act of commission is not forgiven till it be repented of, for sure the time before that mans birth, and the time after it, are as truly present to God before all eternity, as the time of this commission and that repentance.

§. 51. The onely way for us to understand our selves or any thing that belongs to Gods actions concerning us, is that which the Scripture supposes and commands us to walk in, not the way of Gods secret counsels, (which if we knew, were no longer secret) not the way of Gods immensity, (which if it were intelligible by us, were not immensity) but the way of his revealed will, which is, that whensoever the sinner *repenteth* him of his sinne, and *amends* his life, he shall have his sin *blotted out* and *put out of Gods remembrance*, i. e. forgiven unto him and not till then: and to suppose he may have remission before such repentance, is to suppose God perjured who sweares he shall not, and to lay falsity to the charge of the whole Gospel, which resolves, *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish*.

§. 52. To all this I might farther adde that Gods justifying the faithfull man, is the approving his fidelity upon tryall of it, and so acquitting him (upon a *shewall* or probation) from suspicion of hypocrisie, pronouncing him faithful, or Evangelically righteous, and upon that, owning him as a friend, entering into League with him, as might appeare by Gods *justifying Abraham and calling him friend* (in the sense wherein they are Christs friends, which doe *whatsoever he commands them*, so approve themselves unto him) if it were now seasonable to examine that businesse. This being supposed, it would be most evident, that such an act of knowne deliberate sinne committed in time of tryall, is quite contrary to *justification*, even as contrary as *Abrahams* refusing to beleeve Gods promise first, or after to sacrifice *Isaac*, you may suppose would have been. Of which the least that can be said, will be this, that such a failing is a shrewd blemish to sincerity, which will make it necessary for him that is guilty of it, to repaire his credit with God by expressing a great sense of his miscarriage, and by many future performances of constancy, and resolution, if ever he hope to be approved, or *justified by him*.

§. 53. But now having thus far confirmed this, and so rather strengthened, then weakened the objection, the next thing I shall desire may be observed is this, that every non-remission of a sinne for some time, every displeasure of Gods, every not-imputing to righteousness, is not an utter intercession of justification, is not a calling all the former forgotten sinnes to remembrance, for to such onely an Apostacy, or continued falling away from God betrays the soule. For, the whole current of my life may approve my fidelity to God, though some one action be very contrary to it: Nay secondly, a Father may be displeased with his Sonne for some one fault, and yet not disinherit him, nay upon farther provocation he may cast him out
of

of his family, and yet afterward receive him into it againe.

So that there are three degrees observable in this matter, first displeasure, secondly wrath, thirdly fury. First withdrawing of the Fathers favour, suspension of pardon, so tis in case of any such single act of sinne presently repented of, considered before its retraction. Second, casting out of the family, totall intercession of mercy for that present, so tis in case of such sin permitted in indulgently. Third, utter finall irreversibile abdication, so tis in case of finall obduration.

§. 54.

This may be illustrated, 1. by a vulgar, then by an ecclesiasticall resemblance. Among friends 1. there may be a matter of quarrell, dislike, displeasure, and one friend justly frowne upon the other, yea and keep some distance from him, and be really angry with him, for some act of injury done by him, contrary to the lawes of friendship, which till he hath some way repaired, the friend may justly not pardon him, and so abstaine for that present from the former degree of familiarity with him: but then 2. the injured friend may continue as injurious still, and go on and persist in that course of falsenesse or unfriendlinesse, and then the injured friend wholly forsakes his company, breaks off those bands of friendship with him, yet so as that upon the others relenting and amending, he may yet againe returne to him, and so that totall separation prove no finall one, 3. there is, upon obduration or no manner of relenting, a finall irreversible breach.

§. 55.

The ecclesiasticall resemblance is, that of the three degrees of excommunication among the Jewes, the first or lowest, was *niddui* separation, not totall turning out of either sacred or civill society, but remotion to a distance, that the offender should not come within foure Cubits of any other, and so be denied the peace of the Church, and the familiar kind of communion, which others enjoy. Above this there was *cherem* which was a totall exclusion or determination with anathemas or execrations joyned with it, but yet was not finall, then thirdly there was *Schammatha* giving up to destruction or desolation, delivering up to Gods conning in judgement, and that was irreversible.

§. 56.

Now for the full satisfying of the argument, (having already shewed you the state of this offender in respect of justification) it will onely be necessary to adde one thing more, that the state of the same man as it respects sanctification, is parallel and fully proportionable to the state as it respecteth justification, and so the objection will quite fall to the ground.

§. 57.

To the clearing of which you must know that sanctification may be conceived in a double notion: 1. as a gift of Gods, 2. as a duty of mans. To prevent mistake, this I meane, God gives the grace of conversion and sanctification, and he that is effectually wrought on by that grace, is converted and sanctified, this is it which I meane, by the first notion of sanctification, as it is a gift of Gods: But the man thus converted and sanctified, i. e. thus wrought on and effectually changed by the Spirit of God, is bound by the Gospell-law, to operate according to this principle, to use this talent, and this is called, to have grace, Heb. 12. 28 i. e. to make use of it to the purpose there specified of serving God *εὐαρίστως* (i. e. either *well pleasedly*, cheerfully, willingly,

§. 58.

lingly, or *well pleasingly*, so as God may and will accept) *in righteousness* and *godly fear*, according to the notion of *Having* in the parable of the talents, where tis said that *to him that hath shall be given*, i. e. to him which makes use of the talent intrusted to him, operates accordingly, doth what that enables him to doe, offends not against it by idleness, or by commission of contrary sinnes, which he that doth, is the *non habens*, *he that hath not* there, from *which shall be taken away*, &c. And this having of grace is it which I meane by the second notion of sanctification, as it is a duty of mans, which I conceive is meant by the Apostle, when he saith, *this is the will of God, even your Sanctification*, and *he which hath this hope purifies himself*, and *let us cleanse our selves from all filthinesses perfecting holiness*, all which places suppose the thing spoken of, to be the *duty* of man which by the help of Christ *strengthening* him, he is *able* to performe, and therefore upon the supposition of *Gods working in him both to will and to doe*, to will, by sanctifying, to doe, by assisting grace, he is incited and exhorted by the Apostle, *to work out his owne salvation*.

§. 59. This being thus cleared, will beeasily granted in the second place, that every such act of deliberate commission as we now speak of, is contrary to sanctification in this latter notion, contrary to the *duty* of the sanctified man, from which breach of duty it was, that we bound him before under that guilt, which nothing but repentance could rid him of, and if you mark it, that is the onely thing which contracts a guilt, the doing somewhat contrary to *duty*, and so the want of this second notion of Sanctification it is, the want of sanctified operations, which interposes any rubs in the businessse of our justification, and not so properly that wherein God onely was concerned, his not giving *grace*, guilt being still a result from sinne, and sinne being a *breach of the law*, a contrariety to duty and not to guilt; and though he that hath not received the gift of sanctification be not justified, yet the cause of his non-justification then, is not, in proper speaking, Gods not having given him grace to sanctifie, (for that is but a negative thing, and cannot produce non-justification, which is in effect a positive thing by interpretation, signifying condemnation, two negatives making an affirmative, non-justifying being non-remitting of sinne, and that the actuall imputing of it to condemnation) but the sinnes of his former and present impenitent un-sanctified life.

§. 60. This also being thus cleared, I shall onely adde a third thing, and then conclude this matter, that in the same proportion that any such act of sinne doth unjustifie, it doth un-sanctifie also, i. e. shake and waste, though not utterly destroy, that sanctified state that before the man was in, by the gift and grace of God.

§. 61. For as there were three degrees of provocation in the matter of justification, so are there also in this of sanctification, the first, *grieving the Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. resisting it, trashing of God in his course of grace and bounty towards us, putting our selves under *niddni*, as it were, in respect of Gods grace, as well as his favour, and so weakening our stock of sanctity, and this the deliberate act of sinne may be thought to doe. The second, is *quenching*

quenching of the Spirit, 1 Thes. 5. 19. putting it quite out, rebelling and vexing his holy Spirit, 1s. 63. 10. a totall extinction of grace, the Cherem that brings the present curse, or anathema along with it; and this is not done by one sin nor persisted in, but onely by a habit or indulgent course of sin; and the third, is the despighting, or doing despite to the Spirit of grace, Heb. 10. 29. that which is proportioned to Schamatha, that makes the final irreversibile separation betweene us and Gods sanctifying grace, the first did not wholly deprive the sinner of all grace, no nor of sufficient to enable to repent: the second, did so for the present; the third did so finally also.

If you will now demand what are the effects and consequents of that displeasure of God, which this single act of sin brings upon the offender; I answer, that I have in some measure answered that already, shewed you at the beginning many lugubrious effects of it; and if that be not sufficient to satisfy you, or to shew the non-remission of such sinne till it be retracted by repentance, I shall then proceed one degree farther yet to tell you,

That the method of Gods dealing in this case (of such single acts of commission) seemeth by the Scripture to be after this manner. Upon any such commission, Satan is wont to accuse that man before God, [such or such a regenerate child of thine is false into such a sin, and so into my hands as the sinner] then to desire, or require solemnly, to have him to winnow, by inflicting punishments upon him, and God yeelds many times to this demand of Satans, delivers the offender up to him in some limited manner.

To which delivering though temptations (or afflictions which ordinarily are signified by temptations in Scripture) are constantly consequent, yet not utter desertion or withdrawing of grace, but allowing of strength sufficient to victory, *δυναμὴν καὶ κράτος*, ability to beare, 1. Cor. 10. 13. *ἐνδύσασθαι*, passage out of those difficulties in that same place, *ἀρκούντες χάριν*, sufficient grace, 2. Cor. 12. 9. and assistance of his faith, that it faile not totally, (which is the importance of Christs having prayed for Peter, Luk. 22. 32. his intercession being a powerfull intercession (as may appeare by his [Father, I knew that thou bearest me alwayes, Job. 11. 24] and so in effect, the obtaining from his Father, and actual conferring on his Disciples the grace which he prays for) And therefore it is observable, that as those which are thus accused and demanded by Satan are generally such as, were it not for this present particular commission, would passe both with God and him, for faithfull Disciples, and good Christians, and therefore do still retain that title (as appears by the word *ἀποκρίτωρ*, when Satan is called the accuser of them, Rev. 12. 10. *κατήγορος ἀδελφῶν*, the accuser of the bretheren, or the faithfull, it seems they are faithfull still, though they have been guilty of some act, for which he thus accuseth them, and so he is called *κατήγορος ἐκλεκτῶν*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. the plaintiffe or enemy, *ἐκ δυνάμει*, of you, i. e. the elect, to whom he writes, c. 1. 1.) so the end of yeelding to Satans request in delivering them up to him is also fatherly and gracious *ἵνα παιδευθῶσιν*, that they may be disciplined, or taught not to blaspheme, 1 Tim. 1. 20. *ἵνα ἐντροπαυθῶσιν*, that he may be ashamed, 2. Thes. 3. 14. *ἵνα σώσῃται τὸ πνεῦμα*, that the spirit may be saved, 1. Cor. 5. 5. Whereupon it is,

that the Fathers so clearly resolve it far better, and more eligible to be delivered up to Satan, then to be delivered up to ones selfe, or ones owne affections or desires; the first of them being the ordinary punishment of some act, or acts of sinne on purpose to recall to repentance; the second being the great plague of spirituall desertion, inflicted on indulgent continuers in sin, the first of them a mark of their not-yet-totall abdication, their continuance in sonne-ship whom God thus chastens here, that he may not condemne them with the world; the second, of their being cut off from that prerogative, whom God thus forsakes.

§.65.

To which purpose, of Gods dealing mercifully with his servants in case of single trespasses presently retracted by repentance, (so farre as not to inflict any grand spirituall punishment upon them, such as absolute desertion, or utter disinherizon) I conceive an Image represented to us in Christs command to his Disciples, how oft they should forgive the trespassing brother, *Luk. 17. 4.* If he trespass against thee seven times a day, and seven times a day returne againe to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive; where *trespassing seven times* is a phrase, for [how oft soever he trespass] the word [*forgive*] notes the obligation to punishment without forgiveness, and the interposing the word [*Repent*] proportioned to every *trespasse*, shewes the necessity of that condition to wash off that guilt; and the word [*Turne*] prefix to that, argues the *Repentance* unavailable, if it containe not *turning* in it; upon which, forgiveness being there commanded, if we shall now adde that other place *Mat. 6. 36.* where Gods mercy to us is made the measure of our mercy to our brethren, the argument will come home to prove that God doth, so deale with us, and consequently that every such act of sinne contracts a guilt, which is never pardoned but upon repentance, that upon the speedy performance of that duty the patient is preserved from any heavy spirituall punishment, which would otherwise attend that sin.

§.66.

What we have hitherto said on this particular, will shew the danger of every act of deliberate sinne, and yet withall the difference berwixt such single acts presently retracted by repentance, and the like persisted, or continued in. To which purpose it will be worth the while to behold what we finde recorded of *David*. He, we know, had been guilty of severall acts of sinne, markt and censured in the Word of God; and some of them such, as for them he was in a manner delivered up to Satan to be contumeliously used (as he seemes to conceive from *Shimei's* cursing of him, *2 Sam. 16. 10.* For *Shimei* being an instrument of Satans incursing, and Satan thereto permitted by God upon some crime, for which he had accused him to God, he there calls it, *Gods saying to Shimei, Curse David.*) And yet because he continued not with indulgence in any of them, (his heart presently smiting him, as in the case of numbring the people, and recalling him to instant reformation) save onely in that concerning *Uriah the Hittite* (wherein it appears that he continued neere the space of a yeere, from before the conception till after the birth of the child, as is cleare by the time of *Nathans* coming to him, *2 Sam. 12. 1.*) tis therefore left upon record by God, That *David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from*

from any thing that he commanded him all the dayes of his life, save onely in the matter of *Uiah* the Hittite, 1 King. 15. 5.

From whence although I shall not conclude, that God saw no other sinne in David but that in the matter of *Uiah*, (because I know he saw and punished that of numbring the People, and for that other though not acted, yet designed under oath against *Nabal*. 1 Sam. 25. 22. *Abigail* discernes that it was a causelesse shedding of blood, and an act of revenge, v. 31. (and so no small sinne in Gods sight) yet tis cleare, that the sin in the matter of *Uiah*, that onely sinne continued in for any long time, made another manner of separation betweene God and David, contracted another kind of guilt, (and was a farre greater waister to conscience) then any of those other more speedily retracted sinnes did, was the onely remarkable *Uiah* drawing back, or turning aside from obedience to God, the onely grand defection, shaking off Gods yoke, and so the onely chasme in his regenerate state.

§. 67.

These 4 Propositions being premised, whereof 3 were affirmative, and this last of a middle nature, The rest will be negative; As

§. 68.

Fifthly, that Hypocrisie is not reconcileable with a good conscience. I mean not Hypocrisie which consists in the concealing from the eyes of men the sins or frailties he is guilty of: for supposing those frailties to be what they are, i. e. acknowledging in them a guilt proportionate to their nature, I cannot see why the bare desire to conceal them from the eyes of men (separated from the sins or frailties themselves, and from any treacherous designe in such concealing) should be thought to superadde any farther degree of guilt; when on the other side the publicknesse of a sinne is an aggravation of it, makes it more scandalous, and so more criminous also. Nor againe doe I meane that hypocrisie, which is the taking in any thought of the praise of men (and the like) in our best actions: for as long as we have flesh about us, some degrees of this will goe neare sometimes to insinuate themselves, and then though they prove blemishes to those best actions, and by anticipating the payment and taking it here before hand, robbe us of that heavenly reward hereafter, which would otherwise be rendered to us according to those works, yet still being but spots of sons, reconcileable with a regenerate estate, (as the straw and combustible superstruction, is (in Saint Paul) compatible with the true substantiall foundation,) they will be reconcileable with good conscience also, which is alwayes commensurate to a regenerate estate.

§. 69.

But the hypocrisie which I meane, is, first, that which is opposite to (and compatible with) Sincerity: first, the deceiving of men, with a pretence of piety, putting off the most Un-Christian sins, having no more of Christianity then will serve to mischieve others, i. e. onely the pretence of it to disguise the poyson of a bitter heart. Secondly, the deceiving of God, or thirdly, his owne soule, not dealing uprightly with either, and nothing more contrary then this to a good conscience.

§. 70.

Secondly, the maimed mutilate obedience, th: compounding betwixt God and Satan, the *Samaritanes* fearing the Lord and serving their owne Gods,

§. 71.

joyning others with God, and paying to them a respect equall or superiour to that which they pay to God, serving Mammon and God, or Mammon more then God. Or

§. 72. Thirdly, the formall profession, the *ἡμίμωρος* or outside-garbe of Godlineesse, not joyning the inward, but making a meer pageant of piety, denying the power thereof. Or

§. 73. Fourthly, the hypocrisy of the wisher and woulder, that could wish he were better then he is, could be well pleased to *dye the death of the righteous*, to have all the gainfull part, the revenue and crown of a good Conscience, but will not be at the charge of a conscientious life; Or

§. 74. Fifthly, the hypocrisy of the partiall obedient, that is *ὑποκριτικὸς* of duty, chooseth out the easy, smooth, pleyable doctrines of Christianity, the cheap or costlesse performances, the *ἀδύνατος ἐντίβητας*, will *serve the Lord his God of that which costs him nothing*, will doe some things that have nothing contrary to passions in generall, or particularly to his passions, like *Herod* that could *heare Iohn Baptist gladly*, be present at as many Sermons as he could wish, (and many the like painlesse performances) but when the weightier matters of the law expect to be taken up also, cannot submit to such burthens. Or

§. 75. Sixthly, the hypocrisy of the temporary, which abstaines onely as long as the punishment is over his head, and awes him to it, or as long as he meets with no temptations to the contrary; both which what place they have in the death-bed repentance even when it is not onely a sorrow for sinne, but a resolution of amendment also, I leave it to be considered. Or

§. 76. Seventhly, the hypocrisy of those which commit evill that good may come of it, who venture on the most Vn Christian sins for Gods glory, accept the person of the Almighty, doe injustice for his sake, or rather suppose him impotent, and tetch in the Devill or their owne vile lusts to releive and assist God, of whom the Apostle pronounceth their *damnation is just, Rom. 3. 8.* Or

§. 77. Lastly, the hypocrisy of him which keeps any one close undeposited sinne upon his soule. These are each of them contrary to some part of the ground of good Conscience, to the foundation of Christian confidence, some to the *sincerity*, some to the *resolution*, and some to the obedience, *ἐν ᾧ* in all, and some to the perseverance which is absolutely necessary to the good Conscience.

§. 78. A sixth Proposition is, that a supine wilfull course of negligence and sloth, whether in duties of mans particular calling, or more especially in the duties of the generall calling as we are Christians, that sinne of *ἀσέβεια*, is not reconcileable with a good Conscience, (Omissions being destructive, such they may be as well as commissions) whether it be omission of the performance of morall or Christian precepts (Christs improvements of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount, being not onely as Counsell, but Precepts obligatory to Christians) or whether it be onely the wilfull supine slothfull neglecting the meanes of knowledge, such as are agreeable to my course of life: Or the neglecting to make use of those meanes which are necessary to enable me to get out of any sinne: (One act of which nature was by Christ noted

noted and censured in his Disciples, Their *not fasting and praying to cast out that Devill that would not otherwise be cast out.*) Or the not avoyding such occasions which are apt to betray me to it; Such acts as these, are (as Christ saith to those Disciples) acts of *faithlesnesse and perversenesse*, Mat. 17. 17. and consequently the continued course of them contrary to the sincerity or endeavour, and so unreconcilable with a good conscience.

The seventh Proposition is, that all habituall customary obdurate sinning is unreconcilable utterly with a good Conscience. I adde the word [*Obdurate*] which signifies the hardning of the heart against the knowledge of the truth, against exhortations, against threats of Gods word, against checks of naturall Conscience, or illuminations of grace, against resolutions and vovues to the contrary, for this will make any habit certainly unreconcilable with a good Conscience; Whereas it is possible that some Customary sinning may be through ignorance of the duty, and that ignorance if it be not contracted by some wilfulnesse of mine may be matter of excuse to me, and so reconcilable with a good conscience by force of the second Proposition. But the obdurate holding out against Gods spirit, either knocking for admittance but not opened to, or checking and restraining from sin after conversion, and not harkned to, resisting all Gods methods of working on us and still resolutely walking after the flesh, this is by no means reconcilable with a good conscience, nay nor any habit of sin simply taken (for that is exclusive of the habit of piety necessary to the good conscience) unless it have that authentique plea of faultlesse ignorance to excuse it.

§.79.

The eighth proposition is, that any deliberate presumptuous act or commission of any sin, against which damnation, or not inheriting the Kingdome of heaven, is pronounced in the New Testament, being not immediately retracted by repentance, humiliation, and all the effects of godly sorrow, 1 Cor. 7. 11 is wholly unreconcilable with a good conscience. Such are Gal. 5. 19. *Adultery, fornication, uncleannesse, lasciviousnesse*, (four distinct degrees of incontinence) *Idolatry, witchcraft*, (two degrees of impiety) *hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders*, (nine degrees of the *pride of life*, or that other branch of carnality flowing from *Souds*, or the irascible faculty) *drunkennesse, revelling*, (the *species* of intemperance) and such like: and the same with some variation and addition, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. and Eph 5. 5. Every one of these at the very commission have the nature of *peccata sauciantia*, wounding the Sinner to the heart, letting out a great deale of good blood and vitall spirits, and weakening the habit of Christian vertue, of *peccata clamantia*, crying sins, the voice of conscience so wronged by them, calling to heaven for judgement against such oppressours, or perhaps Satan carrying an accusation thither against such offenders; and if upon this they be not straight retracted by an earnest contrition, humiliation and repentance, they then proceed farther to be (any one act of them) *peccata vastantia conscientiam*, Sins wasting & despoiling the conscience, betraying to some sadder punishment, even desertion, and withdrawing of grace, and delivering up to our own hearts lusts, a consequent of which are all vile affections, Rom. 1. and that *revera*, cursing, Heb. 6. 8.

§.80.

§.81.
Vid. Coch.
exe. Gem.
Sanh. p.
148. &
Buxtof.
instit. Ep.
p. 75.

Just as it was the manner of the Jewes Judicatures. He that was punished by their וַיִּנָּח separation or אֲפֻקָּיָה (not permitted to come neare any man within foure cubits) if he did not thereupon shew and approve his repentance within the space of two moneths, on that contumacy was then smitten with their אֲנָתָה the anathemation or execration, and sometimes cast into prison. So is Gods dealing with the sinner remaining impenitent for such a space, subtraction of Gods grace and spirit, the curse of the Gospel is his portion.

§.82.

For the clearing of which truth yet fartherre, twill be observable that the danger that arises from one sinne of the first magnitude, against which the sentence is pronounced, that they who are guilty of such, shall never inherit eternall life, is or may be to him that after the knowledge of the truth relapses into it as great as that which is incurred by many lesser sinnes, or by a relapsing into a generality of impure life, and therefore the remaining in that one sinne, will be as unreconcilable with a regenerate estate, as the remaining in many other, and proportionably one act of it as noxious and wasting to conscience, as apt to provoke God to withdraw his spirit, as many acts of those lesser sins, and though neither any single act either of lesser or greater sinne in a sincere lover of Christ, presently retracted, (as it will be if he continue so) doth so grieve, as to quench Gods spirit utterly, so provoke God, as to make him wholly withdraw his grace and totally desert him; yet if that one sin be continued in, favoured and indulged to, either by multiplying more acts of it, or by not expressing repentance for it by all those means which the Apostle requires of his incestuous Corinthian, or which are named as effects of godly sorrow, 2 Cor. 7. 11. this direfull punishment of desertion is then to be expected as the reward of any one such sinne, and from thence will follow any impossibility for that man so deserted ever to return to repentance again, Gods speciall ayde, which is now withdrawne, being absolutely necessary to that.

§.83.

Where yet of those, that thus remain in any such sin, there is some difference; For some that so remain in sinne, doe so remain that they desire not to get out of it, hate to be reformed; others though ensnared so in sin that they cannot get out, yet are very earnest and sollicitous to find out some means to break through and escape out of those snares, and then this latter state of soul though it be not sufficient to give claime or right to mercy, (the victory over the world, the actuall forsaking of all such sins being necessary to that, and not only our wishes that we were victorious) yet is it a nearer and more hopeful capacity of the grace of repentance, more likely to be blessed by the returning of Gods spirit enabling to repent, then that former state of contemptuous continuers in the same sin appears to be.

§.84.

For though in both these states there is no repenting without Gods new gift of grace, and no absolute promise that God will be so gracious to such sinners, yet there is a place, 1 Iohn 5. 16. which makes a difference between *sinne unto death*, and *sinne not unto death* (both of them states of impenitence and persisting in sin, but differing as the two latter degrees of *excommunication* did among the Jewes, *Cherem* and *Sannatha* both noting a total

tall separation, but the latter a small also, and by the composition of the word intimating death or desolation, giving up the sinner to divine vengeance, as hopelesse or contumacious, in reference to which the phrase is here used, a sinne unto death, whereas the other, of impenitence, not arrived to that desperate contumacy, is a state of curse under *cherem* and *anathema*, but not unto death yet; and allows this priviledge to the prayers of faithfull men for others, that they *shall obtain life for those that have sinned not unto death*, where that [the not being to death] of a sinne, is to be taken not from the matter of the sinne, but from the disposition of the sinner, and so from this desiring to get out, though he remain in it, or somewhat answerable to that, might, if any doubt were made of it, be proved as by other arguments so by putting together the peculiar use of the word *ἀναγιγνώσκω* in that Authour, for abiding and continuing in sinne, and the no extenuation that such abiding is capable of (so farre as to make one such abiding so much lesse then another such abiding, as that one should be called *ἡσυχάζων*, the other not) save only this of wishing and heaving and labouring to get out, (which supposes some remainder of exciting, though not of Sanctifying or assisting grace) while the other goes on without any care or love or desire of reformation.

And though still there be no promise that such a relapst unreformed sinners prayers shall be heard for him'selfe upon that bare desire to get out, which his praying for grace will suppose (there being no such promise of grace to the relapst person upon his prayer, as there is to any else) yet it is cleare from that place of Saint *Iohn*, that this priviledge belongs to the prayers of other faithfull penitents, for such a more moderate degree of unfaithfull impenitents upon their request *God will give life to such*, i. e. such a degree of grace as shall be sufficient to enable them to recover back to repentance, of which being given them upon the others prayers, if they make use, (as infallibly they will if they were and continue to be really solicitous to get out of that state) they shall undoubtedly live eternally. §. 85.

The practice of which doctrine of Saint *Iohns* thus explyained, you shall see every where in the stories of, or canons for the penitents, where they that for any sinne of Ecclesiasticall cognizance were excommunicated, did return to the peace of the Church, (an image of the peace of God) by severall degrees, of which the first was, to stay and oft lye without the Church doores, and in the porch at houres of prayer; and desire those that retained the honour of being accounted faithfull, and so had liberty to go into the Church, to pray to God for them. Which as the secure supine negligent impenitent was not likely to doe, so was he not to expect the benefit of it, nor the Christian brother obliged to pray for him, though yet by Saint *Iohns* [*ὁ Θεὸς ἐκείνος λέγει*] I say not of that or concerning that state of sinne that he shall pray] I am not convinced that it were unlawfull so to doe. §. 86.

By all this thus set and bounded with its due limitations, the truth of my eight Proposition will appeare, of the unreconcilableness of such presumptuous acts of such branded sinnes unretracted, with a regenerate estate or good Conscience, as being indeed quite contrary to every part and branch of the premised ground of a good Conscience. §. 87.

§.88. To which all that I shall adde is onely this, that he that renders but the comforts of this life, i. e. of a *Good Conscience*, will be sure never to commit deliberately and presumptuously, or having by surreption fallen, never to lye downe or continue one minuit unhumbl'd unreformed in any such sinne, on which that direfull fate is by Christ or his Apostles inscribed [shall not inherit the Kingdome of heaven] where yet as I shall not affirme that none shall subject us to that danger but those which are there specified, (for there is added and such like, and other sins there may be committed with the like deliberation and presumption, and so as contrary to *Conscience*) so shall I not say that all that commit any one act of any of these without that deliberation and presumption, or that are presently by their own heart smitten and brought to repentance for them, shall incur that danger; for the words *deliberate* and *commit*, the doers and committers of them signifie the deliberate committing and indulgent yeelding to them, contrary to which the use of surreption at the time and the instant subsequent retraction of them (by contrition, confession, forsaking, and reinforcement of greater care and vigilance for the future) will be sure meanes to deliver from that danger.

§.89. Where to yet this caution must be annex which may passe for

§.90. A ninth Proposition. That the frequency or repetition of any such acts after such contrition and resolution is an argument of the unsincerity of that contrition, of the deceavableness of that pretended greater care, and so a symptome of an ill *conscience*, as the spreading of the skall or leprosie after the Priests inspection is sufficient to pronounce the patient uncleane. *Levit. 13.* and as that disease in the relapse may be mortall which at first was not.

§.91. Other more particular niceties I confesse there are, the distinguishing of which might be usefull for some mens states, and help disabuse them both out of an erroneous and a secure, yea and an over trembling conscience. But because that which would be thus proper to one, being laid down in common, or cast into the lottery, might have the ill hap to be drawn by him to whom it is not proper, (as that physick which would purge out a distemper from one, wil breed a weaknesse in another) and because no wise man ever thought fit to take lawes out of generalities, I shall resolve rather to obey such reasons, and to be directed by such examples, not to descend to particulars, then to be in danger first of tempting the Readers patience, then of interrupting his peace.

Pray for us, for we trust we have a good Conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. Heb. 13. 18.

F I N I S.

